

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8416 of September 14, 2009

Fifteenth Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Today, we commemorate a milestone in our Nation's struggle to end violence against women. Authored by then United States Senator Joe Biden and signed into law in September 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was the first law to create a comprehensive response to this problem at the national level. This landmark achievement has helped our Nation make great strides towards addressing this global epidemic.

VAWA sought to improve our criminal justice system's response to violence against women and to increase services available to victims. It directed all 50 States to recognize and enforce protection orders issued by other jurisdictions, and it created new Federal domestic violence crimes. The law also authorized hundreds of millions of dollars to communities and created a national domestic violence hotline.

This bipartisan accomplishment has ushered in a new era of responsibility in the fight to end violence against women. In the 15 years since VAWA became law, our Nation's response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking has strengthened. Communities recognize the special needs of victims and appreciate the benefits of collaboration among professionals in the civil and criminal justice system, victim advocates, and other service providers. With the support of VAWA funds, dedicated units of law enforcement officers and specialized prosecutors have grown more numerous than ever before. Most importantly, victims are more likely to have a place to turn for help—for emergency shelter and crisis services, and also for legal assistance, transitional housing, and services for their children.

Despite this great progress, our Nation's work remains unfinished. More families and communities must recognize that the safety of our children relates directly to the safety of our mothers. Access to sexual assault services, especially in rural America, must be increased. American Indian and Alaska Native women experience the highest rates of violence, and we must make it a priority to address this urgent problem. We must also work with diverse communities to make sure the response to violence is relevant and culturally appropriate. We must prevent the homicide of women and girls who have suffered from domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

Far too many women in our communities and neighborhoods, and across the world, continue to suffer from violence. Inspired by the

promise and achievement of the Violence Against Women Act, our Nation stands united in its determination to end these crimes and help those in need.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the Fifteenth Anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act. I call upon men and women of all ages, communities, organizations, and all levels of government, to work in collaboration to end violence against women.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fourth.

BARACK OBAMA

Proclamation 8417 of September 15, 2009

National Hispanic Heritage Month, 2009

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

The story of Hispanics in America is the story of America itself. The Hispanic community's values—love of family, a deep and abiding faith, and a strong work ethic—are America's values. Hispanics bring together the rich traditions of communities with centuries-old roots in America and the energy and drive of recent immigrants. Many have taken great risks to begin a new life in the hopes of achieving a better future for themselves and their families.

Hispanics have played a vital role in the moments and movements that have shaped our country. They have enriched our culture and brought creativity and innovation to everything from sports to the sciences and from the arts to our economy.

Hispanics have served with honor and distinction in every conflict since the Revolutionary War, and they have made invaluable contributions through their service to our country. They lead corporations and not-for-profits, and social movements and places of learning. They serve in government at every level from school boards to statehouses, and from city councils to Congress. And for the first time in our Nation's history, a Latina is seated among the nine Justices of the Supreme Court of the United States.

As Hispanics continue to enrich our Nation's character and shape our common future, they strengthen America's promise and affirm the narrative of American unity and progress.

To honor the achievements of Hispanics in America, the Congress, by Public Law 100–402, as amended, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as “National Hispanic Heritage Month.”